

PowerLines

A monthly publication for member/owners of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative

October 2015

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Give us your opinion for a chance to win a \$25 bill credit

PLUS:
National Cooperative Month

Making your home smarter

Halloween Safety Tips

Survey

Please take a few minutes to fill out our short survey on page 6.

All surveys submitted will be eligible to receive one of 10 \$25 bill credits!



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800-824-5102

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Reliability, service and cost

Our goal here at Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative is to provide you, our member/owners, with reliable electric service while spoiling you with amazing customer service, and doing both of those at the lowest possible cost.

I'm fully aware that it is one thing to say that, but an entirely different thing to actually do it on a regular basis. I think the actions of all of our employees definitely speak louder than my words.

Reliable electric service

As I've mentioned in previous messages, reliably powering your homes, farms and businesses is our main focus.

Our goal each year, from a distribution standpoint, is to make sure your electricity is on at least 99.9 percent of the time. That equates to keeping your power on for an average of 8,758 hours out of the 8,760 hours in a year. I'm pleased to say that we are well on our way to beating this goal in 2015.

We've also begun the process to construct three new substations. Those projects should be completed by the end of 2016 and will result in even better system reliability.

Amazing service

I'm extremely proud of our friendly and courteous employees. Whether it is a lineman getting called out in the middle of the night or a member care representative setting up a budget billing program, our employees regularly go out of their way to take care of you.

We have engineers that help set up new services, and we have energy efficiency experts that can walk through your home and offer tips to save you money.

We're also fortunate to have in-house mechanics that maintain our fleet locally saving thousands of dollars every year.

Cost

It's no secret that our rates are a bit higher than we'd like them

to be. There are several reasons for that, but the most important one is our density. With only three members per mile of line that we maintain, our fixed costs involved in supplying your electricity are split up between far fewer people.

Compared to neighboring investor-owned utilities that can reach a density of 40 customers per mile of line, you can see our challenge. That's why we are constantly looking for ways to cut costs while maintaining the high level of service you've come to expect.

That's also why we've given back over \$500,000 to you in the last few years when our electricity sales exceeded budgets because of extreme weather conditions.

We will continue to focus on the items we have the most control over: providing you with reliable electric service and incredible customer service.

Sincerely,

Bob Hunzinger



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Benefits of your co-op membership

Being a member/owner of your local electric cooperative brings many benefits.

YOUR ACCOUNT

Flexible Payment Options

Our payment options include: cash, credit card or check in our Paxton office; online payments via SmartHub; Walmart Money Centers; phone payments; automatic bank account drafts; and automatic credit/debit card payments.

SmartHub

The power of data is in your hands with convenient account management, detailed bill and kWh information, the ability to report outages, and simple bill payment features. SmartHub is available online and as a FREE app.

Budget Billing

This program is designed to keep your monthly costs consistent by paying the same amount each month.

PrePaid Advantage Program

You control how much you pay, and when you pay it with our PrePaid Advantage Program. Plus, you can avoid large deposits with this program.

Energy Assistance

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is designed to help eligible households pay for energy services.

OUTAGES

If you experience a power disruption, please call us at 800-824-5102 to report it. If possible, call from a phone associated with your account so our automated outage system can work as efficiently as possible.

You can view our real-time outage map on our website at www.eiec.coop.
NEVER go near downed power

lines. Even if your power is out, the lines may still be energized. Call us immediately at 800-824-5102 if you see any downed power lines.

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

Energy Wise Home Loan Program

Our low-interest loan program is a great way to finance an electrical service upgrade or an energy efficiency remodel.

Loan possibilities include a geothermal system, an air-source heat pump, or insulation upgrades.

All loans are conveniently placed right on your monthly electric bill and there are no early payment penalties. We will loan up to \$20,000 for up to 10 years to qualified borrowers.

Standby Generators

Since we can't control Mother Nature, Eastern Illini offers Briggs & Stratton automatic standby generators. Ranging in size from 7 kW to 60 kW, these generators automatically start when the power goes out, giving you piece of mind.

Renewable Energy Program

We are pleased to offer a net-metering program for our member/owners interested in renewable energy. We'll work with you every step of the way to make sure your system meets our guidelines and interconnects safely.

Co-op Connections Card Program

All Eastern Illini member/owners are automatically part of this free program that offers discounts at over 100 local businesses and national online retailers. In addition, you can receive discounts on prescription drugs and other medical related services.

Capital Credits

Since we are a cooperative, we are owned by you - the member/owners

we serve. Each year, based on our financial condition and the amount of electricity you've used, we allocate margins (excess of income over expenses) back to you. Then, when it won't jeopardize our overall financial condition, we return a portion of that allocation back to you as a capital credit payment.

Home Energy Evaluations

Our certified energy specialists are available to help you with all of your energy-related questions or concerns. They will visit with you at your home to answer your questions. Their basic services are all offered at no charge, and there is a nominal fee for some of the advanced services.

Monthly Publications

As a member/owner of Eastern Illini, you receive a complimentary subscription to the Illinois Country Living magazine. You will also receive this PowerLines newsletter. Each of these publications keep you informed about what's happening at the cooperative and in our industry.

Online Resources

We all lead busy lives. In addition to viewing and paying your bill online, our website, www.eiec.coop, features money saving tips and energy efficiency ideas designed to help you live more comfortably. You can also find energy calculators, renewable energy information, and heating & cooling cost comparisons.

SAFETY

For a small monthly fee on your electric bill, we will install and maintain an outdoor light for you.

Before any digging project, make sure you call JULIE at 8-1-1 so we, along with other utility companies, can mark all underground service.

October is national cooperative month

Cooperatives come in all kinds of shapes and sizes, but all share a common purpose - to take care of their members.

October is National Cooperative Month, and Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative – and all co-ops across the U.S. – are celebrating the benefits and values that cooperatives bring to their members and communities.

Cooperative Principles

While co-ops operate in many industries and sectors of the economy, seven cooperative principles set us apart from other businesses: voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; member's economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training and information; cooperation among cooperatives; and concern for community.

“Today, people prefer options and alternatives to ‘big box’ businesses,” says Eastern Illini’s President/CEO Bob Hunzinger. “The co-op business model is unique and rooted in our local communities. Co-ops help us build a more participatory, sustainable, and resilient economy.”

Cooperatives are all around

Eastern Illini is proud to be part of America’s cooperative network, which includes more than 47,000 cooperative businesses. Some cooperatives may surprise you. Ocean Spray, Land O’Lakes, Sunkist, and Cabot Creamery are all nationally known examples of cooperatives.

Most credit unions are cooperatives, and anyone involved with agriculture

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is familiar with farming co-ops.

Eastern Illini is one of more than 900 electric cooperatives, public utility districts and public power districts serving 42 million people in 47 states. Electric co-ops provide power for many Illinois residents, with 24 electric co-ops serving 294,366 members throughout Illinois.

Cooperative benefits

One of the tangible benefits of being a member of a cooperative is the ability to receive capital credit payments. Since we are a not-for-profit cooperative, any extra income after our bills are paid is allocated back to each of you in the form of capital credits.

Learn About Co-ops

It’s a Matter of PRINCIPLE

The Rochdale Principles

Co-ops deliver electricity, sell produce, provide loans, and arrange for housing, health care, and more. But despite these differences, they all have one thing in common—seven cooperative principles:

- Voluntary and Open Membership
- Democratic Member Control
- Members’ Economic Participation
- Autonomy and Independence
- Education, Training, Information
- Cooperation Among Cooperatives
- Concern for Community

Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World

Each year, if our financial condition allows for it, we return some of that money to you. All because you are a member of the cooperative, and you have a stake in what we’re doing.

In the last several years, we have returned over \$3 million to Eastern Illini members, and we expect to add to that total later this year.

Being part of a cooperative definitely has benefits. Our only purpose is to provide you with safe and reliable electric service as economically as possible. We hope you spend a few minutes filling out the survey on page six of this publication to let us know how we’re doing.

To learn more about cooperatives, please visit us online at www.eiec.coop.

Learn About Co-ops

Electric Cooperatives Build a Better World

Member-owned electric co-ops transformed the landscape of rural America, delivering safe, reliable, and affordable electricity for 75 years. www.nreca.org



America's Electric Cooperatives

DID YOU KNOW?

- Electric co-op lines cover 75 percent of the U.S. landmass.
- Serve 42 million people in 47 states.
- Electric co-ops have retired \$9.5 billion to members (capital credits) since 1990.

CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY:

Every June, more than 1,500 high school juniors take part in an educational trip to Washington, D.C. during the Rural Electric Youth Tour.

Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World

Making your home smarter

The future is now for some connected appliances.

From smart grids and cars to smart phones and wearable technology, we find ourselves living in a “smart” world. It is smart in that tasks that previously required our thought and action can be done automatically.

Here are some tips and ideas on how you can make your homes smarter by incorporating efficient, money-saving technology and appliances.

Automated smart systems can control many of your home’s electronics and motors, including: lighting, heating and cooling systems, pool pumps, irrigation systems, and kitchen appliances.

Installing automated lighting systems, which include everything from dimmer switches to motion sensors, can help save you money on lighting.

Energy.gov reports that heating and cooling make up more than half of your utility bill. With a programmable thermostat you can save on these costs. A smart thermostat can give you more control over the way your home uses energy, both at home and away. It allows you to set different temperature levels for specific times — even for specific rooms — so you can use less energy when you are not home.

Some smart thermostats even have apps so you can receive updates, remotely control the temperatures, and monitor energy use.

If you are looking to invest in something more substantial, installing a house-wide automation system can wirelessly connect to your home’s appliances, lighting, climate control, and many other systems, and enable you to turn off all lights and appliances with the push of a button whether you are heading out the door or sitting on a beach.

When it comes time to shop for new appliances, the purchase price is an important consideration — but so is the operating cost over the life of the appliance. Look for brands with an Energy Star rating, which meet or exceed government efficiency standards.

For more information on energy efficiency and electrical safety, visit EnergyEdCouncil.org.

GE Energy Management & Demand Response Appliances



Utility companies that have implemented time-of-use pricing communicate their daily rate schedules to the home.

GE’s Demand Response Appliances react, saving money while lowering peak demand and the need for more power generation.

Optionally, the GE Home Energy Manager correlates rates with user-preferences to balance cost, comfort, and convenience.

Home Energy Manager This energy brain works in conjunction with you and your home to help understand and optimize energy use.	Refrigerator This Profile refrigerator can reduce energy use on demand and delay defrosts to inexpensive rate periods.	Range & Microwave Cooking energy is reduced and with dual cavities, the range can preference the smaller upper oven.	Dishwasher The dishwasher is aware of expensive rate periods and can wait to run when energy costs are lower.	Laundry Pair When high rates arise, this laundry pair will save you money while getting your clothes clean and dry.	Hybrid Water Heater The water heater can switch to heat-pump mode and modify temperature settings during high rates.

General Electric is on the leading edge of a “smart” home with their energy management and demand response system. Here at Eastern Illini, we are watching this technology closely and may soon offer a special electric rate based on an hourly fluctuation of electricity pricing.

HALLOWEEN SAFETY TIPS



WALK SAFELY

- Cross the street at corners, using traffic signals and crosswalks.
- Always walk on sidewalks or paths. If there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic as far to the left as possible. Children should walk on direct routes with the fewest street crossings.



TRICK OR TREAT WITH AN ADULT

- Children under the age of 12 should not be alone at night without adult supervision. If kids are mature enough to be without supervision, they should stick to familiar areas that are well lit and trick-or-treat in groups.



KEEP COSTUMES CREATIVE AND SAFE

- Decorate costumes and bags with reflective tape or stickers and, if possible, choose light colors.
- Have kids carry glow sticks or flashlights to help them see and be seen by drivers.



DRIVE EXTRA SAFELY ON HALLOWEEN

- Drive slowly, anticipate heavy pedestrian traffic and turn your headlights on earlier in the day to spot children from greater distances.
- Popular trick-or-treating hours are 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. so be especially alert to kids during those hours.



Eastern Illini
Electric
Cooperative

Source: Safekids.org

Fill out our survey for a chance at \$25

Please take a few minutes to fill out this short survey. Answer the following questions, then simply mail it to us along with your electric bill payment. You can also fax the completed survey to 217-379-2936 or fill it out on our website: www.eiec.coop.

All submitted surveys will be eligible to receive one of 10 \$25 bill credits!

Please rate your satisfaction with Eastern Illini on each of the following:

	not at all satisfied								very satisfied	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Providing excellent customer service	<input type="radio"/>									
Ability to resolve issues or problems	<input type="radio"/>									
Conducting business in a professional manner	<input type="radio"/>									
Friendly and courteous employees	<input type="radio"/>									
Knowledgeable and competent employees	<input type="radio"/>									
Charging reasonable rates	<input type="radio"/>									
Providing valuable programs and services	<input type="radio"/>									
Delivering good value for the money	<input type="radio"/>									
Community involvement and support	<input type="radio"/>									
Providing information about energy efficiency	<input type="radio"/>									
Supporting renewable energy	<input type="radio"/>									
Having a minimum of outages	<input type="radio"/>									
Restoring power quickly after an outage	<input type="radio"/>									

For the following four questions, please rate your answers based on a scale of 1 to 10.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Considering all your experiences, how satisfied overall are you with Eastern Illini?

not at all satisfied very satisfied

To what extent has Eastern Illini fallen short of or exceeded your expectations?

falls short exceeds

Imagine an ideal utility company. How well do you think Eastern Illini compares?

not very close very close

If you could choose your electric company, how likely is it that you would choose Eastern Illini again?

very unlikely very likely

How do you view your relationship with Eastern Illini?

I'm a member/owner I'm a customer

How long have you received electricity from Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative?

Less than 5 years 6 - 12 years 13 - 18 years 19 - 24 years Over 25 years

What is your age range?

Under 25 26 - 35 36 - 45 46 - 55 56 -65 Over 65

Please list your account number so we can contact you if you are one of the winners of the \$25 bill credit drawing. Your account number can be found on your electric bill. _____